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Ross, J. L. Tiltan and C. C. Bates to serves with officers as elective members of executive committee.—HERBERT OSBORN, *Secretary*.

Botanical Seminar of the University of Nebraska.—January 16.—At the regular monthly meeting. De Alton Saunders presented a paper upon “The Relations of the Laboulbeniaceæ to the Red Seaweeds,” illustrated by blackboard sketches of their structure.

January 23.—This adjourned meeting was devoted to a Symposium upon “Systematic Mycology” led by Roscoe Pound, who spoke first upon “The Relation of Morphology to Classification” and then upon “Schröter’s Arrangement considered as a Modification of the Brefeldian Arrangement.” He was followed by Dr. Bessey on “The Natural Arrangement of the Fungi,” and F. E. Clements on “Suggestions for a Re-arrangement of the Higher Fungi.”

SCIENTIFIC NEWS.

A PROTEST.—I am sure that I voice the opinions of a large number of naturalists when I protest against a tendency very strong in some localities to rename things already well named. It would even appear to an outsider that these persons must think that by this introduction of new names they were greatly advancing science. To me it seems that they must be clogs to the wheels of progress. One must needs know a double or even a triple nomenclature to read their papers intelligently, and this learning of these new names is, as Col. Lyman has expressed it, “like saw-dust swallowing, neither palatable nor nutritious.”

As an example of what I mean I may cite the article on “Formal” in the January number of *THE AMERICAN NATURALIST*. We are told there that “the term formaldehyde is a cumbersome one” and “formal” is suggested as a substitute. Shall, therefore, every cumbersome name be discarded? Do not the constituent parts of the name mean something? Is not the name of the sea-urchin of northern New England—*Strongylocentrotus droebachiensis*—cumbersome? Must we, therefore, change it?

If we must change the names of these substances, of these things, because of their sesquipedalian names, let us take some pains with the substitutes proposed. Formal for formaldehyde is unfortunate. Formaldehyde has the formula $\text{H}-\text{CHO}$. By the rules of chemical nomenclature the term “formal” would mean a compound like acetal, one which would have the formula $\text{H}-\text{CH}-(\text{OE})_2$ and hence the endeavor to get rid of a cumbersome term introduces a worse confusion. It is, to quote Waterhouse Hawkins’ pun, bewildering.

—A COMPARATIVE ANATOMIST.

Again we are to use the term formal for formaldehyde both for this substance itself and for its solution in water. Is this not adding to confusion? Formalin, we are told is a term which has no meaning. From the standpoint of chemical terminology this is true but from another standpoint it is not. It is an arbitrary term introduced into the language to denote a forty per cent. solution of formaldehyde in water and as such it has a distinct meaning and, on the ground of convenience, a very great value.

In the same article are other illustrations of just this same tendency against which I protest. There are incidentally mentioned axon, alba, tela, and the like and one trained in the nomenclature of universal use has to refer to a large series of papers in order to ascertain just what is meant by all of these expressions. I can see no reason why the term notochord is not good enough for anyone; it is descriptive, and it has but a single meaning which cannot by any possibility be confused. How about its proposed substitute "axon" I have not taken the trouble to look up the reasons for substituting this term. On its face it would seem to imply something pertaining to the axis (of the body). But is the notochord really axial? As far as the vertebral centres are concerned it is, but beyond this it is not, and to just this extent it is a misnomer. So far as any higher metazoan may be said to have an axis, that axis is the alimentary tract.

These I merely instance as examples of what I protest against. The terminology of modern zoology is sufficiently overloaded already with terms and this attempt so persistently made in certain quarters to give us in addition an almost complete series of synonyms is most aggravating. I would suggest to these would be reformers that there is no little truth in Goethes' lines when he says that reality "ist alles

"Name ist Schall und Rauch.

Umnebelnd Himmelsgluth.

COMPARATIVE ANATOMIST.

Emil du Bois-Raymond.—The well known physiologist, professor of physiology at the University of Berlin, founder of the Physiological Institute, and perpetual Secretary of the Berlin Academy, died December 26th after a severe illness. Prof. du Bois-Raymond was born, November 7, 1818 in Berlin, where his father, who had begun life as a match maker, had attained considerable eminence. His early education was received at the College Français in Berlin and later at the College of Neuchatel. At the age of eighteen he entered the University of Berlin and was matriculated in the Philosophical Faculty.

At first he was much interested in electricity and attended the lectures of Neander. But about 1837 he took up seriously the work in which he became so well known. After some time spent with mathematics, physics and chemistry, he began studies under J. Müller, and somewhat later became his assistant.

His being asked in 1841 by Müller to repeat the observations of Matteucci in his essay "*Sur les phénomènes électriques des animaux*," published at Paris a year previously, led to the historical studies that he embodied in his dissertation for the degree of D. M. (*Quæ apud veteres de piscibus electricis extant argumenta*"), and to the discovery of the main facts of modern electro-physiology. In 1858 he succeeded Müller as Professor of Physiology at Berlin, and in 1867 was chosen secretary of the Berlin Academy. As a result of his forethought the Berlin laboratory became the model for similar laboratories the world over, for the plans upon which the palatial building in Neu Wilhelmstrasse was erected after the Franco-German war, were of his designing.

His papers are numerous, but his great work is that "*On animal electricity*," the first volume of which appeared in 1848 and the last only about ten years ago. In 1878 he published his "*collected papers*," which comprise all of his scientific work done up to that time except what had been embodied in his "*Thierische Elektrizität*." The historical introduction contained in the first few chapters of his "*Animal Electricity*," his essay on university organization (1870), that on the present and the past of physiological teaching, and on the relations of natural history to natural science (1878), that on the limits of natural knowledge (1882) are well known.

The real greatness of the man consisted, not in the theories that he put forth, but in the exactitude of his observations, the excellence of his methods, and the large number of new relations that he discovered between physical and vital phenomena. As Ludwig taught the world how to investigate the mechanics of the circulation, and as Helmholtz how to determine the time-relations of physiological processes of very short duration, du Bois-Raymond not only opened a new field for investigation, but also furnished the means of working it.

Like other great teachers he founded a school, and if his pupils were not so numerous as those of some other greater teachers, they occupy very important academical positions. (See "*Nature*").

Prof. Francis E. Lloyd, who now holds a position in the Pacific University, Forest Grove, Oregon, has been appointed professor of biological science in the Teachers College.

The Danish Paleontologist, Henrik Julian Posselt, died July 20, 1896. He was connected with the museum in Copenhagen and was a student of Molluscs and Molluscoids.

Dr. Stuhr goes to the University of Breslau as assistant in the Anatomical Institut, in the place of Dr. H. Endres who went some time ago to the University of Halle.

Dr. N. Tschermak, of St. Petersburg, succeeds Prof. Barfurth as professor of comparative anatomy and embryology in the University of Dorpat.

Mr. Fernand Latush calls the attention of correspondents to the fact that his present address in Cadellac-sur-Garonne, Gironde, France.

Dr. Auguste Louis Brot, conchologist, died Aug. 30th, at the age of 75; for forty years, he was connected with the museum at Geneva.

Dr. V. Goldschmidt has been advanced to the position of professor extraordinarius of mineralogy in the University of Heidelberg.

J. C. Willis, formerly assistant in botany in the University of Glasgow, has gone as Director to the botanical garden in Ceylon.

Professor F. Jeffrey Bell has resigned his position as professor of comparative anatomy in Kings College, London.

T. S. Hart, of Melbourne, is appointed tutor in geology and botany in the School of Mines, Ballarat, Australia.

Dr. Theodor Margo, Professor of zoology in the University of Budapesth, died Sept. 5th, 1896, aged 80 years.

Dr. A. V. Fomin has been appointed assistant in the botanical garden of the University of Dorpat.

N. Rüdinger, professor of anatomy in the University, of Munich, died Aug. 25, aged 64 years.

Dr. N. Andrussov, of St. Petersburg, takes the chair of geology in the University of Dorpat.

Dr. Jensen was recently appointed privat-docent in physiology in the University of Halle.

Dr. R. Zander, assistant in botany in the agricultural school in Berlin, died Sept. 10.

Dr. F. Tognini is now conservator of the botanical garden of the University of Pavia.

Th. Hick, instructor in botany in Owens College, Manchester, is dead, at the age of 56.

Dr. Fritz Westhoff, privat-docent in the Akademie of Münster, died Nov. 11, 1896.

Dr. v. Dungern is now docent in bacteriology in the University of Freiberg.

Dr. Braus is now privat-docent in zoology in the University of Jena. Maurice Chaper, Malacologist, died in Paris July 5, 1896.

L. Rudolph, botanist, of Berlin, is dead at the age of 83.